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VOL. XXI, No. 23

MONDAY, APRIL 23, 1928

WHOLE No. 580



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WHOLE No. 580

CAESAR, DE BELLO GALLICO 7.45-52 THE ATTACK AT GERGOVIA¹ A CASE OF THE "LIMITED OBJECTIVE"

There are a few passages in Caesar's Commentaries, lucid as these are in general, which are continually causing his critics trouble and sowing dissension among scholars². One of these passages is that in Book 7 (Chapters 45-52) in which he describes his defeat at Gergovia. The passage is so interesting from a military point of view that it has seemed to me particularly unfortunate that it should not be clearly understood³. Two interpretations seem to prevail. On the one hand, Caesar is regarded as having glozed over his defeat by saying somewhat more or somewhat less than the facts warranted⁴. On the other hand, he is supposed to have given, as usual, a bare record of the facts, but to have omitted here the one fact which alone would make his narrative credible⁵. Neither interpretation is satisfactory.

¹The writer of this paper, a graduate of Harvard University (1913), is a publisher, and also President of The Dial Press, New York City. During the Great War he was a captain of infantry, with the 80th Division, in France; he served both in the line and on the staff. After the Armistice he served as a Major in the Historical Section of the General Staff at Chaumont. Mr. MacVeagh has found time, somehow, to keep up his study of the Classics. The readers of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY are fortunate indeed to have presented to them a study of an ancient military problem by one who is both a student of the Classics and a man of practical experience in matters of war. C. K. >

²Compare e. g. George Long, *The Decline of the Roman Republic*, 4.321, note 4 (London, Bell and Daldy; Cambridge, Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1872): "...he <Drummann> perverts the text and shows his conceit and want of judgment".

³Compare T. A. Dodge, *Caesar*, 263 (Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1892): "This is one of the most inexplicable circumstances of his career". How far historians have drawn on their imaginations in dealing with it may be judged from a comparison of Caesar's text with Charles Merivale, *History of the Romans Under the Empire*, 2.23 (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1866); W. Warde Fowler, *Julius Caesar and the Foundations of the Roman Imperial System*, 225-226 (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1891); and James Anthony Froude, *Caesar*, A Sketch, 350-352 (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897).

⁴Compare Dodge, 259: "This part of the *Commentaries* is plainly disingenuous"; Napoleon III, *Histoire de Jules César*, 2.270 (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 2 volumes, 1865-1866): "César déguise un échec avec habileté"; W. Drummann, *Geschichte Roms*, 3.312, note (Leipzig, Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1906): "...nur Beschönigung seines Fehlers, oder eine Ausrufung des Stolzes, welcher nicht gestehen mag, dass man wider Willen wich"; T. Rice Holmes, *Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*, 248 (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1911): "...honest or not, his narrative is certainly unsatisfactory; and it is a pity that he did not think fit to say exactly what he intended to do".

⁵So Napoleon III, who is characteristically on the fence. He finds Caesar disingenuous, and yet at the same time makes up an excuse for him: "Évidemment il se flattait de prendre d'assaut Gergovia par un coup de main avant que les Gaulois, attirés par une fausse attaque à l'ouest de la ville, eussent eu le temps de revenir la défendre. *Trompé dans son espoir* <the italics are mine>, il fit sonner la retraite". By this Napoleon meant that Caesar saw that he had not been quick enough and therefore sounded the retreat. But Caesar says the opposite: "Having accomplished his purpose" — of that purpose *surprise*, it must be acknowledged, was at least a part — he ordered", etc. Why did not Caesar himself seize on such a good excuse, if it was all ready to hand? Long, however (319-321), proceeds to expand Napoleon's excuse. He thinks that Caesar *may have intended* to seize the Col des Goules, and not the town at all. But Caesar says nothing of this intention, and his use of the Aedui would seem to remove it from the realm even of conjecture (see note 7, *ibid.* w). Long's weight in military matters may be judged from the following remark, used to explain a "retreat" when the legions had by no means yet reached either Col or town: "...He may have thought this was enough for that day..."

It seems to me that we do not have to go far afield for an explanation of what to Caesar and his troops was apparently quite simple. The straightforward, matter-of-fact tone of the passage in question is no different from the tone of the rest of the Commentaries, and there is no record of any contemporary misunderstanding of Caesar's account of this, his first defeat⁶. Perhaps, therefore, we may not to-day be interpreting the passage as a Roman soldier (we must remember that all Romans were soldiers) would have understood it. I think myself that such is the case, and that Caesar here describes accurately and in all necessary detail an operation which is as comprehensible to-day as it was to Caesar's own troops, and which need give us no more trouble than it did his Roman readers, if we bear in mind the extreme condensation of his style and the unchanging principles of warfare.

It will be remembered that the Gauls held the walled town of Gergovia, situated on the crest of a hill which was part of a longer ridge extending roughly east and west, and that they had further fortified the town on its southern side—the side facing the Romans—with an outer wall running approximately the length of the town half-way down the slope. Between this outer wall and the town wall proper they had placed their encampments. The position was a strong one, the Gauls were in force, and Caesar naturally hesitated for some time to attack. At length he resorted to a stratagem (7.45.1-3). Detaching some cavalry, a portion of his supply train disguised as combat troops, and one legion, to create a diversion to the west and draw off as many of the defenders as possible from the town, and later sending a force of his allies, the Aedui, round by the east on a similar errand⁷, he secretly concentrated his attacking force below the southern face of the town, by the process of infiltration used so often in warfare even down to the days of the Great War itself. Here he stationed himself and gave his orders to his officers.

It was Caesar's habit, when he was giving orders for any operation, to outline his plan. Rarely, if ever, did

⁶See particularly Suetonius, *Julius* 25. He understood the affair to be a severe defeat (*clades*), and would certainly have enjoyed adding that Caesar tried to wriggle out of it and blame others for it, if there had been any such story current. The same remark holds true, to a less degree, of Plutarch.

⁷Merivale omits the Aedui from his account altogether. Drummann (311) makes the strange remark "Die rechte Flanke deckten die Haduer" <the italics are mine>. No doubt they did cover the exposed right flank, but their mission was *manus* <*hostium*> *distinendae causa* (7.50.1), a phrase which has a most important bearing on our problem. For, since the Aedui were sent to 'divert' the enemy, and the only enemy left for them to divert were the few remaining male Gauls in Gergovia (from whose number the *crebri nuntii* of 7.48.1 were drawn), it is obvious that Caesar's objective was the town itself. The hypothesis that their mission was to take the outer defenses in flank is set forth by E. G. Sihler, *Annals of Caesar*, 162 (New York, G. E. Stechert, 1911): "...Caesar had merely intended taking the outer lines of defence..." With respect to this view it may be pointed out that the outer wall could not be a *final* objective, since the position on the other side of it was one of the utmost peril if the town itself were not promptly taken.

he commit troops blindly. Readers of the Commentaries become very familiar with the words *quid fieri velit ostendit*. The process is called 'giving the troops their mission', and is military practice to this day. In the present instance Caesar made no exception to his rule. But what was the mission? Doubtless an assault on the town itself was understood to be the business in hand⁸. But the text shows that this was not the *immediate mission* of the attacking troops. The actual orders (7.45.8-9) are completely inadequate for a general assault on Gergovia. They contain only an admonition to keep the troops in hand and not let them run after booty in the camps, a caution as to the unfavorable nature of the terrain (*iniquitas loci*), with emphasis on the necessity for speed, and, finally, the words, *occasionis esse rem, non proeli*. The capture of the town might be in the offing, but Caesar says nothing about it; he gives the mission of the troops committed to action at this time quite definitely as *occasionis, non proeli*. Now *occasio* in military Latin means 'surprise', but *proelium* means a real struggle, a 'fight', such as the Romans would have to meet at the summit when Vercingetorix and his troops saw their error and came running back. Caesar could not expect to surprise the town itself, since he had first to cross the outer wall, and that would give time for the Gallic messengers to give the alarm, as in fact they did. His surprise, therefore, was necessarily limited to the attack on the outer wall, and thus we see the reason for his orders (at first sight strangely truncated); he was giving instructions for what was merely the first phase of a larger operation, with the object of gaining whatever advantage he might from an initial surprise. That he omitted in his orders to specify what direction the exploitation of this surprise should take proves only that such exploitatio depended upon the success of the mission imparted, or, as we may say, that 'Phase B' depended on 'Phase A'. It does not prove that Caesar intended to stay in the hopeless position between the two walls! But all this happened long before the days of written orders, and verbal orders which are contingent on the success of other orders are always to be avoided. The orders for 'Phase B' would therefore have to wait, and could wait, since with the Roman system

of trumpet signals, in which all the men were thoroughly trained, such orders would not even have to be verbal, but could be issued through brass, from the place where Caesar stood. The main point to remember is that Caesar clearly outlines a *limited* plan, a surprise assault without specified exploitation, and that he adds, or rather prefaces, as being of the utmost importance, a distinct prohibition against letting the troops scatter and get out of hand. That this means there would be further work for them to do is as plain as a pikestaff to a legionary. And so we may paraphrase Caesar's instructions as follows: 'Keep the troops in hand; there will be further orders issued. The terrain is difficult, and it will slow you up, but speed is of the utmost importance in this preliminary maneuver. Having diverted the enemy away from our front, we can, if we are quick, gain the advantage of a surprise'.

So far so good. But what happened in the event? The troops moved out quickly. They surmounted the outer wall. They effected a most complete surprise and accomplished their mission. But they scattered; they went out for plunder in the camps. They got completely out of hand, and Caesar found himself faced with the very emergency he feared. It is at this point in his narrative that we find the sentence which has caused all the trouble for his critics. He says (7.47.1): *Consecutus id quod animo proposuerat, Caesar receptui cani iussit* . . .

Now this sentence is traditionally taken to mean that, Caesar's whole operation having been successfully concluded, he ordered a retreat⁹. Such a meaning offers indeed ample ground for either accusations of insincerity or charges of absurdity, or both. The sentence is amazing, if it means what it has been made to mean. Of course, nothing had been successfully concluded but the initial surprise. On the other hand, this surprise is just what Caesar has told us was his purpose; his orders definitely state this limitation of his plans, telling, as we have seen, nothing of what was to be done with the surprise if successful. Therefore, if we keep in mind what Caesar has just told us, there is surely no necessity to ignore the sentence in question, as Froude does¹⁰, or to invoke the old theory of the 'colored'

⁸Long, who visited the site, says (320), "...That he did not intend to assault Gergovia on the south side, will be plain to any man who has seen the place..." On the other hand, Dodge (264), while remarking the absence of scaling-ladders among the assailants (it is only the *mention* of them that is lacking, however), states that "in the absence of the garrison the thing was feasible" even without ladders. Dodge too visited the site. He was a trained military historian, who followed, as he says, Caesar "all round the Mediterranean". Colonel Stoffel, who is responsible for all military judgments in Napoleon III's *Histoire de Jules César*, agrees; Stoffel was, if anything, even better qualified than Dodge. G. Ferrero, *Grandezza e Decadenza di Roma*, 2.177 (Milan, Fratelli Treves, 1902), is on sure ground when he writes, "E lanciò le sue legioni a un assalto generale, per espugnarla a forza". <In the translation of this volume, under the title *The Greatness and Decline of Rome*, by Alfred E. Zimmern [New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907], we find, on page 115, the following: "...he saw that he must make a supreme effort to capture the city and strike terror into the Gauls by a direct attack, and sent six legions to a general assault. But it was a forlorn hope; the Romans were repulsed with heavy losses..." I add that the only reference given by Ferrero, in his own footnote to this page, is to Napoleon III, 281. C. K. >

So also Drumann, "Er hatte die Stadt erobern wollen", and W. E. Heitland, *The Roman Republic*, 3.215 (Cambridge University Press, 1909), "...Vercingetorix... gave Caesar an opportunity of trying what could be done by a sudden assault..."

⁹So H. J. Edwards, in the Loeb Classical Library translation of the *De Bello Gallico* (1917), renders by "...Caesar ordered the retreat to be sounded..." For a full discussion of this sentence in relation to the credibility of Caesar's narrative see Mr. Holmes, 245-249. On page 247 he says, "...doubtless he intended that, as soon as they had captured the encampment, they should push on at once if there were then reason to believe that they were likely to succeed..." Of course this should read, 'as soon as they had crossed the wall', for the encampment was no military objective at all, whereas the wall was a serious obstacle. Further, Mr. Holmes fails to see that, though, as he says, following Caesar, their "only chance... would have been to push on with all possible speed..." they did not have even this chance if they pushed on without being reformed. As a matter of fact, some did push on, and with speed, but only to certain ruin, since military action to be effective must be *concerted*. In his annotated edition of the *De Bello Gallico*, pages 315-316 (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1914), Mr. Holmes has a long note on the passage in question, but he merely reproduces the arguments of his larger work, and, as there, comes to no conclusion.

¹⁰351-352. All Froude says is, "...An opportunity seemed to offer itself of capturing the place by escalade, which part of the army attempted contrary to orders..." He says not a word of what Caesar *animo proposuerat*. One feels that Caesar could have been quite as successfully ambiguous, if he had felt the necessity. Compare Duc d'Aumale, *Alesia*, 20 (Paris, M. Lévy Frères, 1859), "contre ses ordres". Was this Froude's source?

official *communiqué*¹¹ to explain its imagined disingenuousness, or to suppose, with Napoleon III and George Long, that, though Caesar does not say so, *he saw further progress to be impossible* and ordered the 'retreat' accordingly¹². In regard to this last explanation it may be pointed out that Caesar was not accustomed to omit such essential points. Indeed, his entire Commentaries may be said to be nothing but a series of essential points: hence springs what appears to the schoolboy to be their monotony. No, the fact is that he has already stated what was in his mind, and the words *Consecutus id quod animo proposuerat*¹³ refer back directly to the words *occasionis esse rem, non proeli*. He means that, though his troops were scattered, he had yet gained his purpose, that is, he had indeed effected a surprise.

The first half of the sentence, then, states his gains; the second half tells how he proposes to turn them to account with scattered troops. He says *receptui cani iussit*. But here we strike another snag. 'He ordered a retreat' is the traditional translation! (see note 9, above). Can this be what is meant? Right after recording his initial success, does he mean us to understand that he then deliberately called the whole affair off? Why? A surprise is hardly achieved at such pains, in warfare, for the fun of it, or even for plundering an empty camp. Obviously, since *receptus* is susceptible of several interpretations¹⁴, we can tell what

Caesar means here—only by considering the circumstances and the subsequent events. If Caesar actually ordered a retreat, the operation as a whole was at an end. He was committed, however, at this time in two other parts of the field. Does he tell us that he immediately, or even soon thereafter, sent messengers to the supply-train, etc., and to the Aedui—too far distant, both of them, to hear the trumpets at his side—to break off? He does not. He made no attempt to communicate this important order to either. Indeed, the Aedui actually appear later in Caesar's immediate theater, quite oblivious of any retreat or ordered breaking off of the engagement. Yet what general worthy of the name, not, to say worthy of the name of Julius Caesar, would order a local retreat for his main body and leave two important parts of his total force to continue in ignorance against a now disengaged enemy, victorious and in superior numbers on higher ground? I think it is quite safe to say that *receptus* does not here mean 'retreat'.

Suppose, however, that we take it to mean 'recall'. This meaning, which has been adopted by several commentators¹⁵, is made inevitable by the context, it seems to me. We know that the troops poured over the wall, and any experience in war will provide one with a mental picture of their subsequent disarray. But Caesar further informs us that they then started plundering. So that, when T. Rice Holmes hopefully remarks (247), "it is possible that, as Long maintains, he intended, when he sounded the recall, to form his men again in order . . .", a soldier can only gasp. What else was there for him to do? Even if he intended to retreat—which appears impossible from the context—he still would first have to reform, the only alternative being to accept passively just such a disaster as finally befell him. But if he was going to do that, what is the meaning of the trumpets? One does not give orders for a general rout. No, the soldiers being admittedly out of hand, *the maneuver referred to by the word receptus was one that had to take place before Caesar's intentions could proceed to their realization, whether this was an advance, a retreat, or a halt*. As neither a retreat nor a halt in a most disadvantageous position can by any ingenuity be regarded as an exploitation of success (and Caesar has just said he was successful), we can only suppose that, after the *receptus* had been effected, 'Phase B' would have proceeded according to schedule¹⁶.

¹¹See a remark toward the close of the section entitled Did Caesar fortify the Rhone?, in Caesar's Gallic War, by J. H. Allen, W. F. Allen, and H. P. Judson (Boston, Ginn and Company, 1893): "His notes of battle and march were hastily made up, in little packages, and sent to his friends at the capital, as powder for the campaign going on there". This theory of the writing of the Commentaries is, of course, now obsolete. Compare Holmes, Caesar De Bello Gallico, x, for the accepted view. See also Max Radin, The Date of Caesar's Gallic War, Classical Philology 13 (1918), 283-300, for an interesting theory based partly on a brilliant argument from Caesar's style.

¹²Compare Napoleon III: "Trompé dans son espoir", etc. This hope, as I have pointed out (note 4, above) is a present from Napoleon the Little. The great Napoleon, on the other hand, takes Caesar at his word here, probably because he had himself been in a similar situation. Compare Napoleon I, Précis des Guerres des Gaules, 101 (Paris, Gosselin, 1836): "les troupes s'engagerent plus que leur général ne le voulait". This was the fate that had menaced Scipio at Zama (see note 14, below). Long's "Col" theory has this in common with the "espoir" theory of Napoleon III, that it asks us to believe that Caesar says nothing at all about what must have been uppermost in his mind.

¹³In the belief that, as Mr. Holmes says (Conquest of Gaul, 248), "everything turns on the meaning of these words", C. E. Moberly, according to St. George Stock, Caesar De Bello Gallico, 2, 281 (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1898), concocted "an ingenious device to save the credit of his author . . .". According to Stock, Moberly explained the words in question as meaning "finding himself in possession of the opportunity he desired", and suggested that Caesar "meant to re-form his troops and lead them on to a regular assault". Mr. Moberly grasped the bull, but by the tail rather than by the horns. The words do not mean what he makes them mean, and it helps his author's credit very little to make him say one thing and mean another. The words mean very plainly that Caesar had accomplished his purpose, and the only way to understand them is to understand their *reference*, which is obviously back to the orders he had just given. Further, no soldier would understand "starting a regular assault" after crossing the wall. The assault was a "regular" assault from the moment the troops were committed.

¹⁴There is no English equivalent for *receptus*. H. Meusel, Lexicon Caesarianum (Berlin, W. Weber, 1893), s. v. *Receptus*, gives ἀναχώρησις as the meaning here. But of the Greek word the same remarks hold true as of the Latin word. The word *receptus* is used of almost any kind of drawing back, including withdrawing into oneself, as the ebb of the sea withdraws (see Harpers' Latin Dictionary, s. v. *Receptus*). In De Bello Alexandrino 47, 1, *receptus* means a 'return', and a triumphant return at that. In De Bello Gallico 4, 33, 2 it = a 'forced retreat'. Most instructive is Livy 30, 34, 11. There the word is used, as here, for a *gathering up* or *gathering together* for a new advance, as an animal crouches for a spring. 'He sounded the signal for a recoil' would perhaps indicate best the nature of the maneuver. 'He ordered the "assembly" blown' perhaps comes nearest in our military language. The idea of 'retirement' is

altogether out of the picture, except in so far as some of the men had to come back in order to get the ranks 'dressed'. At the Battle of Zama, which Livy is describing, just as at Gergovia, the troops became scattered by an obstacle interposed between them and their final objective. In both cases we find the signal sounded for a *receptus*. At Zama a successful reorganization was accomplished and a second jump was made to victory. See B. H. Liddell Hart, A Greater Than Napoleon, Scipio Africanus, 180-182 (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1927).

¹⁵Notably Mr. Holmes. See, besides his works already cited, The Roman Republic, 2.198 (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1923). Incidentally, Captain Liddell Hart renders *receptus* in the Livy passage by 'recall'. Holmes, Caesar's Conquest of Gaul², 248, note 1, refers to C. E. Moberly, Caesar, 321-322, note; on page 245, note 7, he refers to W. C. Compton, Caesar's Seventh Campaign in Gaul, 89, 92-95, 97. But these last I have not yet been able to consult.

¹⁶Lest it be objected that I, too, credit Caesar with unexpressed intentions, I would point out that *the intention of taking Gergovia* is the only intention I credit him with that is not expressly stated by him. But this intention is clearly implied by the account as a whole.

But Fate intervened, as we know. The recall signal was either not heard or went wilfully unheeded. The legionaries, once out of hand, could not be reformed in line of battle. Each little band or group went out for itself, and 'Phase B' never got under way. Caesar was beaten not by the enemy, but by a situation which became familiar enough in the Great War. Perhaps he may be excused for thinking he could carry one assaulting wave to two objectives, since he commanded the most perfectly trained soldiers the world has known. In most cases, however, to carry out such a plan is a practical impossibility. Once committed to an action in a given direction on a prescribed objective, troops cannot be redirected, much less recalled and re-launched. A second wave is necessary. Caesar says (7.52.1) that his men failed to heed the signal and that they had thought themselves better judges than he of what they could do; hence we may say that both fate (an intervening valley cut off the sound of the trumpets) and wilfulness spelled the ruin of the Romans. But in any case Caesar had no second wave, and the assault on Gergovia became not a retreat but a rout—for which no orders were issued or needed! Only the Tenth Legion stood firm. It was in reserve, and Caesar might have used it as a second wave to leap-frog the attacking wave and pass on to the final objective. But he refrained. He had the true commander's sense of the difference between reserves and reinforcements, and between a difficult and a desperate situation. Also the Pan-Gallic rebellion was young yet. At Alesia he could afford to risk his all to kill the thing; success at Gergovia at best would only scotch it.

The words *occasionis esse rem, non proeli* are, therefore, the key to this reputed 'difficult' passage of the Commentaries. They occur, as we have seen, in Caesar's orders for the assault, orders which are so remarkable that the military reader will pause over them rather than over the sentence *Consecutus*, etc., which depends on them for its meaning. Caesar himself shows to what extent they are decisive in his narrative by referring back to them in the speech he made to his troops after the action (7.52). In discussing the causes of the Roman failure he blamed the legionaries for getting out of hand and for thinking that they could carry on without redirection from the command. And he added a few words which seem to me to clinch the argument here given for the interpretation of the entire passage.

In these few words he reminded his men of his warning, given in orders, as to the unfavorable nature of the terrain, and recalled to their minds his action at Avaricum when he refused to give battle to the Gauls in what he implies was a similar situation. His words are (7.52.2): *Exposuit quid iniquitas loci posset, quid¹⁷ ipse ad Avaricum sensisset, cum sine duce et sine equitatu deprehensis hostibus exploratam victoriam dimisisset ne parvum modo detrimentum in contentione propter iniquitatem loci accideret*. Evidently the two situations contained, to Caesar's mind, a common element, which he denominates *iniquitas loci*. Now this phrase is uni-

formly taken to mean 'unevenness of ground'¹⁸. But, if at Gergovia the 'unevenness of the ground' was what Caesar warned the troops of and cited so specifically afterwards, his own words show that 'unevenness of ground' was what at Avaricum decided him against the attack. Yet, if we turn back to Chapter 19, we find that such was far from being the case. What he talks about there is *the disadvantage of the position*, that is, it was not only the hill on which the Gauls took refuge that gave Caesar pause. He was always attacking hills, since the Gauls naturally used them for defense. But at Avaricum the hill was, we might say, a special hill—the troops would remember it well, even after the disastrous battle at Gergovia. The slope was but part of a more complex defense, in short, and on the summit the enemy infantry stood in readiness, though Vercingetorix and his cavalry were temporarily absent. It was before this *situation*, not before the hill, that Caesar hesitated. The words *iniquitas loci*, therefore, which Caesar uses to express what he elsewhere calls *iniquitas condicionis*, must mean a great deal more, when they are used in connection with Gergovia, than mere 'unevenness of ground'. I have accordingly translated them by 'unfavorableness of terrain', as the nearest equivalent in English, though the Latin includes a reference to the *position of the enemy* hardly covered by our military word 'terrain', which would naturally be restricted to the nature of the ground and the enemy's defenses.

What, then, we must ask, was that 'unfavorableness of the terrain' which obtained both at Avaricum and at Gergovia, if it was not the simple slope of the ground? At Avaricum, the hill on which the Gauls took refuge presented the difficult feature of a broad marsh at its foot, across which the attacking troops would have to proceed. The marsh was treacherous enough to make it almost impassable except by bridges, which the Gauls had destroyed. Caesar's troops could hope to reach the foot of the hill only by winding their way across, through the bushes that tufted the more dry and solid parts¹⁹, and would inevitably arrive at the foot in disarray, totally unable to cope with a powerful counter-attack launched from the summit. The *iniquitas loci* was thus really a double line of defense, a hill and a marsh, and Caesar's decision not to attack was a decision not to expose his attacking wave, when broken to pieces by the first line of defense, to the resistance of the pickets along the brink and an immediate counter-attack from higher ground.

At Gergovia, of course, there was no marsh. Yet

¹⁸Dodge, Caesar, 261-262: "Barring the use of artillery <sic> he means artillery preparation: the Romans habitually attacked behind a javelin barrage > the whole operation closely resembles a modern assault, in its method of preparation and execution".

¹⁹The Latin words are *vada ac saltus*. Holmes (Caesar, De Bello Gallico, 287) obelizes *saltus*, "rather than accept the very doubtful emendation, *transitus*..." He thinks that, if *saltus* is right, "the thickets were surely... on the hill". Why? One must not think of these French 'marshes' in summer as drowning affairs, as in the legend that Marshal Foch 'drowned' the Prussian Guard in the Marshes of St. Gond! The words *saltus eius paludis* (thickets right in the marsh) provide the stroke that makes the passage vivid and worthy of Caesar. At the most the wetness of these French marshes in summer is treacherous and makes them difficult crossing; but there are always dry spots. Any boy could guess what the *vada* are in such places, the zig-zags across the marsh from hillock to hillock; and he knows, too, that it is just these hillocks that the bushes choose to appropriate to themselves!

¹⁷So the manuscripts. Some, however, read *quod* here.

Caesar himself compares the two situations, giving his troops and us to understand that he considered them similar. Therefore he must have considered that at Gergovia there was a double line of defense which might lead to the same kind of disaster as the one he had feared and avoided at Avaricum. Such a double line was indeed formed by the outer wall (see the third paragraph of this paper). An attacking wave, broken by the assault on the outer wall, would be only too vulnerable to a sortie in force from the town. And thus we see the reason for Caesar's whole plan of operation. The necessity, forced on him by the *iniquitas loci*, of making his attack in two jumps explains why he attempted to direct the defenders on the hill-top first to the west and, later, to make doubly sure, to the east, why he insisted that the troops be kept from plundering the camps, and, finally, why he emphasized the necessity of speed—that the reforming might be completed and the attack again in motion before the Gauls could reassemble and launch that counter-attack which their continued presence on the hill-top at Avaricum had made inevitable there.

The main attack at Gergovia was therefore an attack with a limited objective—the outer wall—subject to a contingent exploitation. But to understand it in this, its true light, we can not separate it from the whole operation of which it was but a part, though the major part, and of which the other elements were the secret concentration, the swiftness of the attack, and the two flank marches executed to divert the defenders from the summit. When it is so considered, the attack indeed takes on an amazingly modern appearance. But this need not alarm us, since the closer an ancient battle is seen to conform to modern practice, the more sure does the military historian become that it has been reported accurately. The principles of warfare do not change.

LINCOLN MACVEAGH

REVIEWS

Latin Roots Appearing in the First Four Books of Caesar's Commentaries. For Handy Reference and Vocabulary Drills in First and Second Year Latin. Edited and Published by H. F. Standerwick. Blair Academy, Blairstown, N. J. Pp. xviii + 116.

In the Foreword of Mr. Standerwick's little book, *Latin Roots*, etc., a "root" is defined (III), after Hale and Buck's *Latin Grammar*, as "the simplest element common to a group of related words and conceived as containing the essential meaning common to all..." There follow (VI-VIII) instructions how to use the book with classes, and a list of suffixes (IX-XI) and prefixes (XII-XIII), with examples. In the main part of the book (I-116) there is an alphabetic list of all the "roots" found in Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 1-4, with the derivatives there found, and meanings intended to explain the semantic development. Let us see how adequately and how accurately Mr. Standerwick has performed his task.

A root seems to him to be the first part of a word, prefixes aside. There are, to him, two roots *aqu*, one

for *aquila* (5), the other for *aqua* (6). There are three roots *av* (8), for *avus*, *avis*, and *audeo* (this last is given with derivatives), respectively. There are four roots *mat* (57), for *matara*, *mater*, *materia*, *maturus* (the last three with derivatives). Now, such wholesale positing of "roots" is only confusing. There is no value in giving a root unless it is really a root for more than one word, if not in the immediate present, then in the future of the child's Latin career. So why posit a root for *matara*, which has no derivatives, or for *avis*, unless the root be *avi*, for the *i* is a constant element in the derivatives of *avis*? There is no special value in reducing *balteus*, *bracchium*, *cacumen*, *caerimonia*, *gubernator*, to *balt*, *bracch*, *cac*, *caer*, *gub*, no one of which is helpful to the understanding of any other word. It is better to learn such words as isolated words, in their full forms, and not to attempt to learn an abstracted root for the sake of one word. But, when there are derivatives, it is imperative to keep as root as much of the common element as possible. Thus, in *gubernator* and its kin, we might extract a root *guberna*, but never a mere *gub*.

With respect to forms there are many unwise phrasings. Typical examples are "*purgo* (= *purus ago*)", 3; "*sollertia, ae* (from *sollers* = *sollusers*)", 7; "*crimen* = *cernimen*", 15, etc. Such juxtaposition in the vocabulary form and such monstrosities as *cernimen* are unpardonable. No vowel quantities are marked. This is unfortunate in compounds of *cado* and *caedo*, and in many others.

From the standpoint of semantics, there is much that is not clear. Thus on page 9, if *occido* means "Fall down, die", one can understand *occasus*, "Setting (of the sun)", but not *occasio*, "Opportunity"; but *occido* does not properly mean 'fall down'. *Mitto* in compounds nearly always means 'let go', not 'send', a fact which spoils several meanings given on pages XII-XIII for compounds of *mitto*.

The preceding criticisms are typical merely, each of a group of instances. I turn now to specific single points.

XII.—*Abdo* is not 'give away' but 'put away'; it is a compound of the root of *facio*, not of the root *do*.

XIII.—*Subtermitto* is a poor example of *subter* as prefix, since it is a rare, late, word. Further a wrong meaning ("send beneath") is assigned to it. The only proper example of the prefix *subter* is *subterfugio*, from which there is an English derivative. But *subter* and its compounds do not occur in Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 1-4; hence there is no reason to introduce *subter* here.

There are many prefixes which are used in noun and adjective compounds other than the prefixes given on page XIII. Such are the prefixes in *difficilis*, *intervallum*, *super-bus*, *trans-alpinus*.

1.—For *ad*, the meaning 'in addition' is essential for the understanding of *addition*, *admixture*, cited as English derivatives.

2.—That the root *aes* ('copper') means "Bright, shiny" is quite undemonstrable.

3.—*Exigue* means 'scantly' (not "Scarcely"). *Subigo* does not mean "Drive thru, accomplish"; how is the pupil to associate *sub-* with *thru*? *Alienus*

means primarily 'belonging to another', an essential meaning entirely omitted in the book. *Alio* means not 'Elsewhere', but 'to another place'.

4.—*Alces*, 'elk', is not from Greek. Both *alces* and *elk* are borrowed from the Germanic. *Inanis* is of quite uncertain etymology; to assume a root *an* for its benefit is useless machinery. *Exanima* should be printed as two words. A root *anc* for *ancora*, from Greek, is worse than useless, unless *ancus* and *angulus* are held included; but *angulus* is wrongly given on page 5 under the root *ang*, with *angustus*.

5.—Under root "Ap, Bind", *adipiscor* is glossed by "Begin to bind, obtain", meanings which neglect the middle voice and the prefix. The meaning is rather 'apply one's self to'; the inceptive force is negligible. Under the same root, "*coepti*...Have begun", defies semantic interpretation, with this gloss.

8.—*Autumnus* is connected with the root of *augeo*, not with the root of *avidus*, *audeo*. *Indutiae* and *proelium* should not be included under the root of *bellum*.

10.—*Caelum* should not be under the root *caed*, 'cut'.

The list of errors could be prolonged indefinitely. I have selected only those which are easily described in a few words.

For absurdity, the derivatives of root "Di, time" (*sic!*) take the prize (23-24). According to Mr. Standerwick, *idem* = *is diem*, *inde* = *imdie*, *jam* = *diam*, *dum* = *dium*; with them are grouped *eodem*, *identidem*, *deinde*, *proinde*, *quando*, *aliquando*, *unde*, *undique*, *interdum*, *nondum*.

A comparison shows that Mr. Standerwick's chief source book for etymology, if indeed not his only one, was Harpers' Latin Dictionary, the latest copyright of which is 1879. Etymology was at that time just beginning to become a science, in consequence of the promulgation of the theory of the "Junggrammatiker" or Neogrammarians—Leskien, Brugmann, Osthoff, and others that phonetic change proceeded along regular lines of development, and not haphazard. The editors of Harpers' Latin Dictionary were innocent of the results brought to etymological science by this theory. So is Mr. Standerwick, fifty years later. *Verbum sapienti sat*.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

ROLAND G. KENT.

The English-Latin Debt. 12000 English Words Derived from Latin. Chicago: Syntactic Book Company (1927). Pp. vi + 91.

In a volume entitled The English-Latin Debt, the authors of which preserve anonymity, English words are listed in alphabetical order under that form of the Latin word which seemed to the authors to be simplest and nearest the root form. Latin derivatives and compounds are listed as captions, with cross-references to the simpler words where the derivatives are found. This leads to some remarkable aggregations of English words: *act*, *chasten*, *essay*, *litigate*, *squash*, *variegate* all come under *ago*, glossed by "To Drive". Now it is true that all these words contain the root of

ago, and, since the purpose of the book is to put in the hands of students lists of English words derived from one and the same Latin root, that the students may trace their development in form and in meaning, there is some justification for the method. I should myself, however, have preferred to list under *ago*, for example, the Latin words also from which the English words come most directly.

Let us see with what accuracy the authors have carried out their plan. We ought to find all the English words of common use in their appropriate places. But under *ago* one misses *navigate*, though he finds *litigate*. Under *bibo*, *bibere*, *bibi*, *potum*, there is no mention of *poison*, *potation*, *potion*. *Horror* is not given under *horreo*, though the rare word *horrent* is listed there. In general, words identical with the Latin words are omitted from this list, being reserved for separate listing on pages 88-91. Under *fendo*, we find *defense* (spelled with a *cl*), but not *offense*. Under *habeo*, we miss *habitat*. Under *hortus*, we miss *orchard*. Under *ligo*, we miss *religion*. Under *minor*, which includes *minuo*, we miss *menu*. Under *nox*, we miss *equinox*. *Pquso* is omitted, and with it the derivatives *pose*, *expose*, *impose*, etc. Other omitted words are *costume* (under *suesco*), *interest* (under *sum*), *vitamine* (under *vivo*). These are chance observations. There must be many other omissions equally serious, of words which are of value in the vocabulary of every educated person. Yet this list does include such rare words as *uxoricidal*, *suicism*, *somnabulant*, *riata* (better spelled *reata*: it is to be found under *aptus*).

Further, the division under captions is not always consistent. Thus, words in *-fico*, *-ficare* are included under *facio*, *facere*. But *dico*, *dicare* is separate from *dico*, *dicere*. *Fabula*, *infans*, *praefatium* are included under *for*, *fari*, but *fateor* has a separate paragraph. *Gigno* and *nascor* have their separate families of words, though they are from the same root; this root is most clearly seen in *genus*, which is listed (with a cross-reference to *gigno*). Words borrowed from Greek are almost entirely excluded, though we do find *poena* and *poeta*. Prepositions and prepositional prefixes are normally omitted: under *trans* we find only *transom* and *trestle* (not *treason* or *tradition*, or any of the many others, which are listed under their second elements). Under *intra*, which is used as a positive on which to hang *interior* and *intimus*, we find over twenty lines of words beginning with the prefix *inter-*. *Ante*, *contra*, *infra*, *post* are listed, but not *ab*, *ad*, *com* (*con*), *de*, *prae*, *sub*, *subter*, etc. It seems rather too abstruse, to me, to include *debeo*, *praebeo*, *prohibeo* under *habeo*, and *dubius* under *duo*, though to do so is etymologically correct. To list the very rare *munis*, 'obliging', as a caption seems doubtful policy; all the words given under it are from *communis* or *immunis* (both may be referred to *munus*, 'service').

I note also certain false etymologies.

Cornu.—*Horn* and *horny* are not derived from Latin *cornu*, but are native Germanic cognates.

Discipulus is not to be referred to *disco*, but to *dis* + *capio*.

Dico, dicare.—Derivatives of *iudex* should be put under *dico, dicare*. They are put under *dico, dicere*, though the derivatives of *vindex* are correctly placed under *dico, dicare*.

Medius.—*Mid* and its derivatives (ten are listed) are not from Latin; *mid* is the Germanic cognate of Latin *medius*.

Populus.—*Public* (and its thirteen derivatives in the list) are really derived from *pubes*, though even in Latin there was confusion of *publicus* and *poplicus*.

Sono.—Latin *persona*, from which come *person* and *parson*, is an Etruscan word remodeled by popular etymology into an apparent derivative of *per* + *sono*. *Persona* has just as much to do with *per* and *sono* as *asparagus* has to do with *sparrow* and *grass*.

Portus.—*Passport* gains its second element from *porta*, not from *portus*.

Pages 88–91 present a list of Latin Words Appearing in English without Essential Change. It might have been better to confine the list to Latin words that appear in English without *any* change at all. As it is, the only English words in the authors' list which differ at all from the Latin words that are their source are *alius* (a misprint, apparently, for *alias*), *altar* (unused singular of *altaria*), *alter* (?), *interest* (changed from *interesse*), *pergola* (for *pergula*), *siren* (Greek, not Latin), *vigil* (from *vigilia*).

The list is far from complete. I miss, for example, addendum, affidavit, alumna, alumnus, ante, apex, bis, caret, conifer, fiat, gradatim, imprimatur, incubula, Magnificat, mater, minutiae, miscellanea, nil, per, pro, propaganda, qua, quasi, requiem, specie, Venite, verbatim, via. The list includes proper nouns, but does not contain Amanda, Clara, Miranda, Rex, and the names of the signs of the zodiac.

But, taking this pamphlet as a whole, one finds it a fairly convenient collection, without great percentage of error. The omissions are not so serious, since they do not give wrong impressions. My chief regret is felt at the absence of most of the prefixes as captions, for the manner in which the Latin prefixes have established themselves in English is a remarkable testimony to the Latinization of our language.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

ROLAND G. KENT

Bibliotheca Philologica Classica. Volumes 50, 51, 52.

By Friedrich Vogel. Leipzig: O. R. Reisland (1926, 1927, 1927). Pp. v + 309; v + 315; vii + 344.

In THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 18.213, 20.58 I gave accounts of Volumes 47–49 of that very important and useful work, the Bibliotheca Philologica Classica. The work gives a conspectus of the publications (books, pamphlets, articles, reviews) within the field of classical philology, in the broad sense of the term, in a given year (schoolbooks and pedagogical articles, however, are not listed).

I noted that Volume 49, which deals with the publications of the year 1922, contained 3,783 entries. Volume 50 gives 4,334 entries for 1923; Volume 51 presents 4,464 entries for 1924; Volume 52 lists 4,884 entries for 1925.

Since the groups in these last three volumes by Professor Vogel are essentially the same as those seen in Volumes 48 and 49, I shall not give details on this subject now, but shall refer the reader to the account in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 20.58.

In the Preface to Volume 52 Professor Vogel explains why he finds himself unable to accept suggestions made by various reviewers for the improvement of his work, good and valuable as that work already is. From much experience I know how difficult it is to get together, and to report with accuracy, bibliographical material. Nevertheless, I venture to repeat here a suggestion I made in THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 20.58 to the effect that Professor Vogel might well add to his work a list of the passages in Greek and Latin authors on which the items recorded by him throw light. When, in 1923, I published a volume entitled Bibliography of Charles Knapp, 1893–1923 (Geneva, New York, W. F. Humphry. Pp. 77), I included four indices to the matters discussed in the articles listed in the Bibliography, as follows: Index Verborum, 53–58 (words and expressions, Greek and Latin, discussed), Index Locorum, 58–61, Index Personarum, 62–64 (a list of the names of scholars that appear in the articles, reviews, notices, notes, etc., which are named in the Bibliography), and an Index Rerum, 64–77 (a list concerned chiefly with the *summa fastigia rerum*, and, more especially, with matters not immediately suggested by the titles of the items listed in the Bibliography). The Index to my edition of the Aeneid, done as long ago as 1901, consisted of 70 pages, two columns to the page, and included thousands of entries.

CHARLES KNAPP

Antike Mode. By Max von Boehn (1927). Pp. 57.

Antike Heilkunde. By Henry E. Sigerist (1927).

Pp. 48.

Antike Stenographie. By Arthur Mentz (1927). Pp. 29.

Buchhandel im Altertum. By Eduard Stempler (1927). Pp. 39.

Gaukler im Altertum. By Alexander Gaheis (1927). Pp. 33.

Antike Küche. By Friedrich Bilabel (1927). Pp. 53.

Antike Schwimmkunst. By Erwin Mehl (1927). Pp. 136.

The seven booklets here under review were all published by Ernst Heimeran (Munich). The first six constitute Volumes 6–11 of the series entitled Tusculum Schriften (see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 19.10, 113). It would seem from the titles and the contents of the present and the previous volumes that the publisher aims to present to the general reader and to those interested in problems of antiquity what one may call a 'Sittengeschichte' of Greece and Rome on a small scale, in attractively written volumes. The volumes are not meant to be exhaustive. They are popular; the authors, scholars who do not need introduction, limit themselves to views which have become more or less traditional.

This fact manifests itself in the first volume, that on ancient fashions. As far as Greek costumes are concerned, the author seems hardly to be acquainted with the article of A. W. Barker, *Domestic Costumes of the Athenian Woman in the Fifth and Fourth centuries B. C.* (*American Journal of Archaeology*, 26 [1922], 410-423)¹. In the case of the Roman toga use has not been made of Dr. Lillian M. Wilson's work, *The Roman Toga* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1924. Pp. 132).

The author begins with the statement that fashion is a social *motif* which cannot be eliminated from the life of a people (6), and then dwells at length on the factors that fostered it in ancient times (7-14). From this point two parts can be distinguished in the booklet. Part I (11-29) deals with Greece. Here the author discusses the styles of dress, for men and for women, according to material, cut, color, and ornamentation. Attention is paid to Asiatic and Ionian influences and to that of the plastic arts. Part II (29-57) deals with Rome and the Greco-Roman world. The author employs the same method as in Part I, since the garments of the Romans developed analogously to those of the Greeks (29). Other topics, such as laws about fashions, fashionable articles for the hair, the complexion, and the body are also discussed, briefly.

Professor Sigerist treats the following topics: 'Wesen' and achievements of ancient medicine (5-8); diagnosis and prognosis (8-12); symptoms, groups of symptoms, and description of diseases (12-21); causes and 'Wesen' of diseases (21-31); aim of medicine (31-41); professional ethics (42-48). This booklet reminds one of the volume entitled *Greek Biology and Medicine*, by H. O. Taylor (in the series called *Our Debt to Greece and Rome*; see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 16.144). Mr. Taylor's book is much the more detailed treatment.

Beginning with M. Tullius Tiro, Cicero's freedman, Dr. Mentz, author of *Geschichte der Griechisch-Römischen Schrift* (Dieterich, Leipzig, 1920), gives a short survey of Roman and Greek shorthand. He believes that shorthand was the invention of the Romans (14-15). The booklet is equipped with specimens of ancient and medieval shorthand writing.

Professor Stemplinger writes, with his usual charm, on phases of the development of the book-trade in Greece and Rome. The foundation of great libraries at Alexandria, Pergamum, and in the Roman Empire, and the consequent insistence on correct editions stimulated the sudden growth of the book-trade, much as the invention of printing did at the close of the Middle Ages (8). The beginnings of a professional book-trade can be traced at Athens during the Peloponnesian War (6), and at Rome in the time of Cicero (12). Among the many interesting topics discussed are the multiplication of books (14-19), prices (19-25), authors' fees, and bookshops (31-39).

The booklet on ancient jugglers, who were for the most part Greeks (33), is very interesting. All the professional classes of jugglers are discussed, e. g. rope-dancers (5-13), conjurers (13-15), fire-eaters (17-18), ventriloquists (20-23). Attention is paid to trainers of

animals (23-26) and to snake-charmers (28). With a short discussion on puppet plays (28-29) and Punch and Judy shows (29-33) the booklet closes.

The following topics are treated in Professor Bilabel's booklet: habits of eating (7-19); cooks and cookbooks (20-29); meat dishes (30-37); fishes (37-43); fruit and vegetables (43-46); flour and milk products, fats and sweetening mediums (48-50); wines and other beverages (50-53). The chief sources on which the booklet is based are the *Cena Trimalchionis*, Athenaeus, a Heidelberg cook book papyrus, which Professor Bilabel, himself a papyrologist, edited, and the famous Apicius. The profession of a cook was considered in Greece respectable and worthy of a free citizen (20). In view of the scientific tendency of the Greek mind and the high development of medicine among the Greeks it is not at all surprising that Greek medicine recognized the importance of proper food and its proper preparation. Therefore a considerable literature developed on the subject (25). The Romans became heirs of the Greeks in the culinary art, as in other arts. At Rome Ennius, the father of Roman poetry, translated the *Hedyphagetica* of Archestratus¹.

Of ancient swimming very little is known. J. W. Krause, in his *Gymnastik und Agonistik der Hellenen*, devotes to it only a few pages, and N. Gardiner, in his *Athletic Sports and Festivals* (Macmillan, 1910), says next to nothing about swimming. Dr. Mehl's booklet, is, therefore, timely, especially since the ancient art of swimming is treated by a professional, from the professional point of view. It is different from all the other books of the *Tusculum Series* inasmuch as it represents a piece of research, and is excellently documented and illustrated. The contents are as follows: general survey (1-8); main passages of the source material (8-89); professional questions (90-124); bibliography and notes (125-129); Index Nominum (130-133); Index Locorum (134-135). In the first part (8-89) the author quotes all passages from both Greek and Roman literature which have any reference to swimming. To each passage quoted there is appended a short commentary discussing the method of swimming involved. Part II (90-124) is devoted to a discussion of styles of swimming, the teaching of swimming, diving, etc. Such questions as the part played in ancient medicine by swimming (114-115), and swimming by women (121) are then taken up. The illustrative material is not limited to the classical period; pictures of Assyrian, Egyptian, and Etruscan swimmers are given (2, 96-97). The author notes that the Greeks considered swimming a part of physical education, whereas the practical Romans thought it useful for military purposes (61-62, 69). On the whole, this book presents attractive reading for those interested in physical education. It may be recommended to teachers of this subject, who might discover that the ancients anticipated them in the consideration of many problems.

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¹Nor does he mention Mr. Barker's monograph, *A Classification of the Chitons Worn by Greek Women as Shown in Works of Art* (this work was, however, reviewed unfavorably in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 19. 16-17).

²Reference may be made here to Cornelia G. Harcum, *A Study of Dietetics Among the Romans*, *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 12.58-61, 66-68, and to a dissertation by the same author, entitled *Roman Cooks* (see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 8.215). Compare also a dissertation entitled *The Role of the ΜΑΤΕΙΠΟΙ in the Life of the Ancient Greeks as Depicted in Greek Literature and Inscriptions* (The University of Chicago Press, 1907). C. K. >.